



Flesh--Literal and Symbolic

FULFILLED PROPHECIES (cont.)

EVENING PRAYER

OUR CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

OCCUPY TILL I COME

Megiddo Message

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Kenneth E. Flowerday, Editor

A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone, The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will.

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- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
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- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God
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"Character in men and women is not something that just happens. It is something hammered out on the anvil of discipline, or comes as the result of a man working against the things that are in opposition to him."

"Nature's laws and that of human nature are one and the same—strength comes from endeavor. We can sit down before obstacles and rot there. Or we can make them steppingstones to higher levels."

"One whose life ideal is that of an untroubled existence, free from all risk and hazard, has no one but himself to blame when the roof falls in. Not all termites are bugs. There are insidious little ideas that gnaw away at the underpinnings of character. Some of the most deadly of these are safety, security, something for nothing."

"There is no such thing as playing it safe. Either we put up or pass out."

[Enclosed was the following newspaper clipping.]

"Northumberland, Pa.

"EDITOR, DAILY ITEM.

"The early church prayed in the upper room. The 20th Century church cooked in the supper room.

"Today the supper room is taking the place of the upper room, play is taking the place of prayers, and feasting the place of fasting. There are more full stomachs than there are bended knees and broken hearts, there is more fire in the kitchen stoves than in the pulpit.

"When you build a fire in the church, it often if not altogether puts the fire out in the pulpit. Ice cream chills the fever of spiritual life. The early Christians were not cooking in the supper room the day the Holy Spirit came, they were praying in the upper room. They were waiting for God, they were not waiting for the fire from the stove but for the fire from Heaven above. They were detained by the commands of God, and not entertained by the cunning of man. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and not stupefied with stew or roast.

"Oh, I would like to see the cooking squad put out. Less gravy and more grace, less soups and more salvation, less ham and sham and more Heaven, less pie and more piety, less use for the cooks and more for 'the Book.' Put out the fire in the kitchen stove, and build it on the altar. More love and life, fewer dinners and get after the sinners.

"Let us have a church full of waiters, waiting on God, a church full of servers serving God and waiting for His Son to come from Heaven."

Bessie V. Fultz
Lewisburg, Pa.

E. B.

Flesh-- Literal and Symbolic

WHEN THE apostle Paul, in his outstanding thesis on death, the resurrection, and the ultimate change from mortality to immortality (I Cor. 15), said: "This I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption," he was speaking of the physical flesh and blood of which all mortal beings are composed. Flesh is mortal, it is corruptible, and it is the age-old plan of the Eternal that nothing corruptible can become a permanent part of His finished handiwork, the blissful condition which shall one day prevail upon the earth.

The term "flesh" is often used to designate all beings possessed of flesh, man and the inferior animals, especially man in contrast with God, who is spirit. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," said Jesus to Nicodemus (John 3:6).

Again the word flesh is used symbolically for the saving knowledge of God's Word as revealed through the prophets, Jesus and the apostles. It was to this flesh that Jesus referred when He said "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you . . . Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man . . . ye have no life in you . . . It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:27, 53, 63).

The word flesh or its counterpart, bones, is sometimes used in the Bible in the same sense as we use it today when we say a person is in "good flesh," meaning good health, physically and mentally. For example "The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart: and a good report maketh the bones fat" (Prov. 15:30).

Symbolic Flesh

The religious world make much of the statements that Jesus made about His flesh and blood. They take them to be all literal, that Jesus was assuring His listeners that in some mysterious way the shedding of His blood on Calvary, and the giving of His physical body and flesh in the death on the cross, had something to do with their salvation. A careful study of John 6 reveals this was not Jesus' meaning.

In v. 27 Jesus reproved the people because the motive that prompted them to assemble in His presence was a desire to receive of the loaves and fishes, rather than to receive such sustenance as would benefit their spiritual life. His words follow: "Labor not for the meat which perisheth but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you" (v. 27). On another occasion Jesus had revealed in His answer to the tempter that there is something more important than literal food: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4).

Continuing His discourse to the Jews, Jesus referred to His symbolic flesh or "meat" as "bread," and in v. 51: "I am the living bread which came down from heav-

en: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." The Jews took exceptions to this. As usual they assumed that He was referring to the natural, and they knew very well they could not eat Jesus' literal flesh. Therefore they strove among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Jesus' answer gave them still further chance to take Him literally.

"Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." But in all this Jesus was making no reference to the literal flesh and blood.

Let us read on and see: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him." The verse following provides a key that we should use to get Jesus' meaning: "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me" (v. 56, 57). Jesus' words here indicate that we live by eating Him in the very same sense as He lived by eating of the Father. Our reason tells us that the only way Jesus could live by the Father was by living by His Father's divine precepts, that is, live by "every word of God." Now if we are to live by eating of Jesus' flesh as He lived by eating of the Father's flesh, it remains that the flesh could not be literal. The physical flesh and blood of Jesus could have nothing whatever to do with our salvation. Now let us see if Jesus understood the proposition that way.

The people were still too blind to see the real meaning of His words. Therefore "many . . . of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" But "When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man" (the spiritual Christ, the Life, Truth, and Way) "ascend up where he was before?" And now He makes a plain statement, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (vs. 60-63). Jesus had been referring to His words as His bread, His meat, His flesh and blood. His meaning was clear, but the eyes of the people were blinded that they could not see. But the disciples could see, they knew what He was talking about as Peter's words reveal.

We read in vs. 66-68: "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." How plain: "thou hast the words of eternal life."

Let us give further thought to Jesus' words in John 6:53, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." We know full well that physical life cannot exist in mortal flesh in the

absence of physical blood. Medical science has made great discoveries regarding the importance of blood and its relation to the life and well-being of a human body, and these days it is recognized that the completeness of the blood is also very important if one is to enjoy abundant health. The fact of the importance of the blood was revealed to Moses and the children of Israel away back in the days of their wandering in the wilderness. The Lord said: "Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof" (Lev. 17: 14).

The life of the flesh is in the blood. The loss of a sufficient amount of blood causes certain death. The same is true with the symbolic flesh, it must have a sustaining amount of blood circulating through it or there can be no spiritual life. And these observations add force to Jesus' words: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." Spiritually speaking the blood represents the living out of the Word, it is the factor that exhibits life. "Faith" without works is "dead," said the practical James, (2: 17). Jesus brings in the thought of blood to show that to please God we must have evidences of life, abundant life, the living out of the Word. We must let our "light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5: 16). It is His demand that we be "strong" in His grace, that we be active so we can "run the race with patience." All members of Zion must go from "strength to strength," the man with clean hands will "be stronger and stronger." To accomplish this we must have good rich red blood—spiritually speaking—and plenty of it to abound in spiritual health.

You might have a knowledge of the Word, but that will not avail to your salvation unless you live it out in your daily life. That is why the word of truth is called "blood," because in the natural life the blood is the vitalizing essential; and in the spiritual life the vitalizing energy is in the living out of the Word. A man's knowledge of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and unsupported by keeping the commandments of God, would avail nought for eternal life.

Another good proof-text to show that the flesh and blood spoken of is not literal is found in Rev. 7: 13, 14. Here the blood is a cleansing agent. Speaking of the people who will make up the subjects or populace of the kingdom, and of the process of spiritual cleansing to which they must submit during the Millennium, we read: "One of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of [or beyond] great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." They were wearing white robes emblematic of purity, and they had washed these robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. The spiritual blood not only activates and gives life, but it also cleanses. And that blood is the Word. Jesus said: "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15: 3).

The same thought is advanced in Jer. 4: 14, "O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?" And again in Isa. 1: 16, "Wash you, make

you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well." That is the inevitable consequence of possessing and washing in the "blood of the new covenant," the living out of the words of truth. The end result will be a robe spotless white, a life wholly cleansed from any stain of sin.

But a literal robe washed in physical blood would never come out white. It would be dyed as red as crimson. But our robe of character, this "fine linen clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints," shall become so by washing in the blood or Word of the Lamb, by obedience to the Word of God. If this is done, then our robes will be pure and clean, without "spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." That is the washing we must engage in.

The Flesh of the Spiritual Christ

In I Cor. 10: 1—4, this subject is further explained by Paul, showing that the flesh we must partake of is spiritual meat. He says, "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." Away back in the days of Moses, nearly two millenniums before the man Christ was born, they were eating the same spiritual meat as Christ gave them to eat, the words of eternal life. That is, they were learning and obeying the commandments of the living God. "They did all eat the same spiritual meat," and the meat, Jesus told us, is to do the Father's will. From the very beginning of God's plan for the salvation of the people of the earth, every accepted one had to eat the same spiritual meat, and drink the same spiritual drink. They had to drink of the spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ, the spiritual Christ, the saving truth.

We here learn that the truth is called Christ. The personal Christ, the grand, glorious coming King who lived over nineteen hundred years ago, was called Christ "the anointed"; and His words, the grand system of divine truth, is also called Christ. That is where the theologians make their great mistake, they do not discern the different Christs of the Bible. The bread that came down from heaven, and the water of life, is the spiritual Christ. We cannot eat the literal Christ, but we can eat His words, the saving truth. When He said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," we can eat, or agree perfectly with that command, and diligently apply that principle to our daily living.

Paul tells us plainly, they "did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock"—not the natural but the "spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ," the truth. That is why Jesus said, "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die" (John 6: 50). It was the spiritual Christ. Hence the meaning of Jesus' words were, I am that spiritual Christ that came down from heaven, the words of eternal life.

The Fool Eating His Own Flesh

We read of still another kind of symbolic flesh in the Bible, a man's own flesh. We read in Eccl. 4: 5, "The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh."

We do not for a moment think he is eating his literal flesh; we understand the meaning of the word. He is one who is idle, one who does not want to read, understand and keep the sayings of the Word of God. He is eating his own thoughts, feeding on the things of his own mind. He folds his hands together and eats his own flesh; but the wise men and women are reading, they are learning, and understanding, and applying what they read. They are eating the holy flesh, the words of the living God. And that is what Jesus meant when He said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."

Food is essential to health; it is essential to life. Starvation is a major cause for death in some parts of the world, due to food shortages. Sufferers from cancer of the liver actually die of starvation because the liver, the link between food intake and assimilation, is inoperative. The fresh supply of food eaten cannot reach the blood stream, therefore life ebbs away. The physical law that food must be taken to maintain life is as inexorable as the law of gravitation. If a plant, an animal, a fish, or a human being, is deprived of food, death is the result.

These same basic rules apply to the spiritual life. Jesus spoke much in a few words when He answered the tempter: "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). Eating every Word of God is as essential to normal spiritual life as is food to the physical body. Neither can be omitted.

The type of food which the fool feeds on is pictured again in Galatians 5 under the classification "works of the flesh." "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." What a hateful category of evils, and what a terrible ending their indulgence assures! Let us no longer play the fool eating his own flesh!

The Holy Flesh

In Jeremiah 11 we find another symbolic use for the word "flesh," the "holy flesh." The thought here is that of a fully consecrated life, complete loyalty to God. If we have those qualities in our lives then we are exhibiting the "holy flesh." But the people of whom God through Jeremiah was speaking had retrograded, they had lost their first love, they had left a life of holiness and complete resignation to the will of God, and had turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers. For clarity let us begin reading at v. 9: "And the Lord said unto me, A conspiracy is found among the men of Judah, and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them: the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers" (vs. 9, 10). Then continuing at v. 14, we read: "Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear them in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble. What hath

my beloved to do in mine house, seeing she hath wrought lewdness with many, and the holy flesh is passed from thee? when thou doest evil, then thou rejoicest" (vs. 14, 15). What a serious indictment!

The glow of spirituality once manifested by the people of Judah is shown by the warm term by which the Lord called them: "The Lord called thy name, A green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit." This is the *before* picture, now for the *after*, "with the noise of a great tumult he hath kindled fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken" (v. 16). The people—the beloved of God—are compared to the open loveliness of an olive tree. Such had Judah once been. But suddenly Jeremiah sees the flash of lightning whereby the tree is blasted and its branches consumed.

A world-famous musician once observed that after the lapse of three days without practice, even his audience noticed the difference in his playing. And the holy flesh is equally transitory. All we have to do is to stop working, or release our constant resistance against the encroachments of the flesh, and the holy flesh—that spiritual discernment and alertness that we built up at such great expense and effort—will begin to pass from us.

A well-known investment company offers its shareholders, capital gains distribution in additional shares, rather than cash. Aware of the inborn lethargy of humankind, they offer, as inducement via a printed card mailed at a pre-dividend date: "to get additional shares, *do nothing at all.*" Cash is paid only on return of the card, signature attached.

Likewise, for the holy flesh to pass from us, we need "do nothing at all," to retain the holy flesh and have laid up in store a good foundation against the time to come that we may lay hold on eternal life, we must get our card properly filled out, signed, and back to the sender promptly. There is no time to waste in lethargy, no time to dilly-dally in doing our duty, if we would keep our investment in the world to come paying regular dividends.

If the holy flesh is to be our prized possession, we must work untiringly to maintain holiness. We cannot possess the one without the other. Holiness is an all-inclusive word, expressing the highest moral standard possible for a mortal being to attain, yet it is not a pinnacle which is beyond our reach. Reduced to its simplest definition it is nothing more or less than the keeping of every commandment of God. God is holy, and it is for us to be holy like Him. Said the Apostle, I Pet. 1:15, 16: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

The maintenance of holiness requires alertness during every wakeful moment of every hour of each day of our lives. It supervises our thinking, impelling us to think only upon the things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report (Phil. 4:8). It bridles our tongue, permitting us to speak only to edification, and only such words as will buildup others and be to the glory of God; to speak the truth at all times and under all circumstances. It directs our interests into a channel where we will put the seeking of the kingdom of God first, and all else secondary, where every proposed action must pass these rigid tests: Is it right? will it be pleasing to the Almighty? can I engage in it without weakening

(Continued on page 9)

Fulfilled Prophecies

that Prove the Bible True



THE DOOM OF DESOLATION ON SAMARIA

Pillars and stones on the hill of Samaria on which once stood the city of Samaria. Today the hill is covered with fields and gardens as foretold by the prophet.

PART IV

HEAVY JUDGMENTS FORECAST FOR SAMARIA

THE PROPHECY

"Therefore I will make Samaria as an heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard: and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof." Micah 1: 6.

Samaria was built by Omri, a wicked king of the ten tribes of Israel. In I Kings 16: 25 we read: "But Omri wrought evil in the sight of the Lord, and did worse than all that were before him." He was succeeded by his son Ahab, who "reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years." Ahab exceeded even his father in wickedness. We are told in I Kings 16: 30 that he "did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him."

Ahab's wife was the infamous Jezebel, the daughter of the King of Sidon. She killed the prophets of the Lord, and compelled the people of Israel to worship Baal, the god of the Sidonians. Because of the multiplied sins of the rulers and the people of Samaria the prophet Micah pronounced the above judgment against the city.

"The predicted doom finally fell. In 1697 Henry Maundrell visited the site of the former capital city, and wrote: 'Sebaste is the ancient Samaria, the imperial city of the ten tribes after their revolt from the House of David. It is situated upon a long mount of an oval figure. This great city is now wholly converted into gardens, and

all the tokens that remain to testify that there has ever been such a place, are only, on the north side, a large square piazza encompassed with pillars, and on the east some poor remains of a great church.'

"Van de Velde, who visited Sebaste or Samaria, in the last century, in his book on '*Syria and Palestine*,' says: 'Samaria, a heap of stones! Her foundations discovered, her streets plowed up, and covered with cornfields and olive gardens. Samaria has been destroyed; her rubbish has been thrown down into the valley; her foundation stones lie scattered about on the slope of the hill.'

Here is prophecy fulfilled with a minute accuracy that is nothing less than supernatural! Samaria has indeed become "as an heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard." The stones of the city have *literally* been poured down "into the valley," and her "foundations" discovered. Only an omniscient Eye could have foreseen this, and an omnipotent Tongue, speaking through the prophet, could have foretold the event more than 2,000 years before it occurred.

(Adapted from *Fulfilled Prophecies that Prove the Bible* by George T. B. Davies. Used by permission of the author).



*"You will never know life's fullness
If there's darkness more than light;
You can never ease your conscience
If your thinking isn't right."*

Evening Prayer

HERE IS NO greater consolation, no greater cause for thanksgiving, than the thought of prayer; making it possible for mortal man to communicate with God. It was the Psalmist who cried out, "O Thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come." If we pray according to His will, He hears us. If our hands are full of sin, and we pray to consume it on our lusts, the communication is at once severed. It was the disciples who called upon their Master to teach them to pray. Morning, noon, and night found the Hebrew captive kneeling to commune with his God.

No part of the day is more favorable to the duty of prayer than its close. I mean the evening. This season, like the morning, is calm and quiet. Our labors are ended. The bustle of life is gone by. The distracting glare of the day has vanished. The darkness which surrounds us favors seriousness, composure, and solemnity. At night, the earth fades from our sight, and nothing of creation is left to us but the starry heavens, so vast, so magnificent, so serene, as if to guide our thoughts upward above all earthly things to God and immortality.

This period should, in part, be given to prayer and devotion. The evening is the close of an important division of time, and is, therefore, a fit and natural season for stopping, and looking back on the day. And can we ever look back on a day which bears no witness to God, and lays no claim to our gratitude? Who is it that strengthens us for daily labor, gives us daily bread, continues our friends and common pleasures, and grants us the privilege of retiring, after the cares of the day, to a quiet and beloved home?

The review of the day will often suggest not only these ordinary benefits, but peculiar proofs of God's goodness, —unlooked-for successes, singular concurrences of favorable events, special blessings sent to our friends, or new and powerful aids to our own virtue, which call for peculiar thankfulness. And shall all these benefits pass away unnoticed? Shall we retire to repose as insensible as the wearied brutes? How fit and natural is it to close, with pious acknowledgement, that day which has been filled with divine beneficence.

The evening is the time to review, not only our blessings but our *actions*. A reflecting mind will naturally remember, at this hour, that another day is gone, and gone to testify of us to our Judge. How natural and useful to inquire what report it has carried to Heaven! Perhaps we have the satisfaction of looking back on a day, which, in its general tenor, has been innocent and pure; which, having begun with God's praise, has been spent as in His presence; which has proved the reality of our principles in temptation; and shall such a day end without gratefully acknowledging Him in whose strength we have been strong, and to whom we owe the powers and opportunities of Christian improvement?

As we endeavor to attain to the image of our Master, some day may dawn which, if we inspect faithfully and speak plainly, can recount some pitfall into which we have stumbled; some defective motives, talents wasted and time misspent; and shall we let the day pass from us without penitently confessing our offenses to Him who has

witnessed them, and who has promised pardon to true repentance? Shall we retire to rest with a burden of unlamented guilt upon our conscience? Shall we leave these stains to spread over and sink into the soul?

A religious recollection of our lives is one of the chief instruments of piety. If possible, no day should end without it. If we take no account of our sins on the day on which they are committed, can we hope that they will recur to us at a more distant period, that we shall watch against them tomorrow, or that we shall gain the strength to resist them, and become pure as He is pure?

The evening is a fit time for prayer, not only as it ends the day, but as it immediately precedes the period of repose. The hour of activity having passed, we are soon to sink into insensibility and sleep. How fit that we resign ourselves to the care of that Being who never sleeps, to whom the darkness is as the light, and whose providence is our only safety! How fit to entreat Him that He would keep us to another day; or, if our bed should prove our grave, that He would give us a part in the resurrection of the just, and awake us to a better, an immortal life!



ALL'S FOR THE BEST

All's for the best; be sanguine and cheerful;
Trouble and sorrow are friends in disguise;
Nothing but folly goes faithless and fearful,
Courage forever is happy and wise.

All's for the best, if a man would but know it;
Providence wishes us all to be blest;
This is no dream of the pundit or poet.
Our God is gracious and all's for the best.

All's for the best; then fling away terrors;
Meet all your fears and your foes in the van;
And in the midst of your dangers or terrors,
Trust like a child, while you strive like a man.

All's for the best; unbiased, unbounded,
Providence reigns from the east to the west;
And by both wisdom and mercy surrounded,
Hope, and be happy that all's for the best.

Sel.

Truly the world today is far advanced along the road of spiritual ruin, moral bankruptcy, and there is not the slightest doubt, that we are living in the closing hours of a dying world, a world dying from the effects of its gross sin. Abomination and wickedness like a winter flood is ever increasing in force and violence, as it gathers strength, and its victims are engulfed in its vicious sin-destroying waters that are dark, foul and evil. Morals are wrecked on the rocks of passion; characters are slain where faith is weak; maybe a few struggling victims will survive and escape from the pit of Stygian darkness before it is too late.

Sometimes a handful of patience is worth more than a bucket full of brains.

The door of opportunity is opened by pushing.

Our Christian Heritage

OUR CHRISTIAN heritage, here in the closing years of man's rule upon the earth, embraces the best of what has gone before.

God said to Abraham, the symbolic father of the faithful, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever" (Gen. 13: 14, 15). This incredibly liberal promise was among the first revelations of the Christian's inheritance on this earth. And Abraham's willingness to co-operate wholeheartedly with the divine plan was the beginning of an heritage which is rich in outstanding examples of courage, vision, self-sacrifice, and service to others. And conversely the record contains examples of weakness, cowardice, and self-indulgence.

Pioneers in any branch of human activity must always play the more difficult role. Abraham, it is true, was in direct contact with angels; but he lacked entirely the numerous examples of Christian living which we from our vantage point are able to discern and verify.

How often do we pause to consider the importance of this vantage point in relation to God's over-all plan on this earth? We are living at an important crossroads in human history, where we can look away back over the road of the past, and at the same time see the rough outline of the road ahead. We can almost see the completion of the first stage of the plan: Christ's coming, the judging and selection of the rulers for the future Kingdom, and the beginning of the new age during which the subjects of the Kingdom will be developed. For nearly six thousand years God's people have looked forward to this very time when the rule of man on this earth will give way to the righteous rule of Christ and His saints.

We not only have the numerous examples of the trials, temptations, lusts and desires of those successful people of old, but we also have a record of how they overcame these human failings. In addition, we have the promise that some in this age will never taste of death. Said Jesus: "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11: 26).

What a heritage is ours!

Do we appreciate it as we should? Are we as thankful for it as we should be? or do we waste valuable time thinking about the things we are asked to give up, the sacrifices we must make, and the pleasures others have which are denied us?

When God promised Abraham that he and his spiritual descendants would some day inherit this earth, it was a promise which would not be fulfilled for thousands of years. But we from our vantage point can almost see the fulfillment, it is so close. It is impossible for us to overestimate the value of our Christian heritage.

We can learn the value of obedience from Samuel, we can find an example of bravery in Daniel, we can learn patience from Job, meekness from Moses. We are instructed concerning the fate of covetousness by Judas; we see the results of jealousy in Cain, lack of stamina

in Solomon, and many more examples we might cite, all contributing to our rich heritage.

From our vantage point today we can look back over the centuries and see the fulfillment of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream exactly as God through Daniel had foretold, the rise and fall of four world kingdoms, only the first of which then existed. Our Christian heritage is so rich and varied that it would be difficult to mention even the outstanding examples. Jesus our great example certainly contributed His share, and Paul the apostle to the Gentiles was another outstanding contributor. We might mention all the men who willingly or unwillingly preserved and translated the Bible: a Luther who fought the abuses of the Roman church; the martyrs who died for what they believed to be right; Columbus who discovered the new world; the Pilgrims and others who settled our continent; the soldiers who died to make and keep our country free; and last but certainly not least, the faithful and wise servant of these last days who brought to light divine Truth after so many centuries of darkness. We certainly should feel a great sense of thanksgiving to our heavenly Father for providing such an abundant heritage.

Another important facet of our heritage today is the fact that we can see many predictions made by God's prophets centuries ago coming to pass right now. Of old the prophet Joel wrote: "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles: Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong" (3: 9, 10). This could not have meant the same to him as it does to us from our vantage point. To Joel it was a forecast made at the Lord's behest, and he could have had very little idea of its detailed or exact fulfillment. Notice this verse starts with "Proclaim ye this among the *Gentiles*." And to show how this is being fulfilled I would like to quote a paragraph from the *United States News* of Nov. 21, 1960.

"The atomic submarine George Washington—first in history to carry thermonuclear missiles—went on patrol under the Atlantic Ocean on November 15. It was a giant move in U. S. efforts to close the 'missile gap' with Russia. Sixteen Polaris missiles give the submarine a destructive power equal to all bombs dropped in World War II. Virtually every major Russian city can be brought within firing range. Navy plans call for 45 such missile subs."

Is it any wonder Jesus prophesied that men's hearts would fail them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth?

Now the great question is: What use are we making of this vast heritage? Are we going to fail to take advantage of it? Are we, like so many of our predecessors, going to spurn it? We may not do that outright, but without a great deal of watchfulness and zeal we may not make full use of this unequaled opportunity. Let us not be so concerned with side issues that we miss the important goal toward which we are aiming—*eternal life*. It will take all the zeal, focus, and energy we possess to reach that goal.

Let us not be like the man who was tinkering with the steering wheel on his car, taking it all apart when the real trouble was with his motor. His steering wheel would have guided him wherever he wanted to go, but he had no power to move his car.

So with us, God has guided and directed for nearly 6000 years, and we are still on the right road. Let us keep the engine in good repair, keep wide awake to our duties, but leave the steering to God.

Flesh—Literal and Symbolic

(Continued from page 5)

the spiritual fiber of my life? It holds a checkrein over the use we make of the function of sight, lest through it some impure or unholy thought may be induced, thus retarding our growth into holiness or stopping it altogether, and so the holy flesh begins to pass from us. Let us aim for that consecration without which no man can see the Lord.

The quest for holiness will induce caution, and fear lest we fail to maintain the high standard of moral conduct required of us. "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God" (Heb. 12:15). We who have been made the trustees of the saving grace or truth of God; we whose eyes have been opened to know good from evil; we who have begun making an effort to put on the holy flesh, the character of the Lord Jesus Christ; let us look diligently lest this saving grace has come to us in vain. Let us be intensely on guard, lest we allow our day of opportunity to pass without using it; lest as with Judah and Jerusalem, we allow the holy flesh to pass from us. If we, like Esau, sell our right to the spirit birth for a mess of fleshly pottage, we shall at the last find no place for repentance though we seek it carefully and with tears. Then recognizing our plight, our doleful lament will be, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

"Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." What a timely warning in these words! What foul growth could be more insidious than a root of bitterness? Bitterness poisons the mind; it thwarts the process of reason, rendering one incapable of judging correctly. It causes one to call evil good and good evil; to justify the wicked and condemn the just, things that God abominates. A root of bitterness injures not only the mind where it is first engendered, but if allowed to grow unchecked will trouble and defile many others and at judgment day will bring down the fire of judicial wrath upon what was once a green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit. What need then to look diligently and continuously!

As mentioned in our introductory remarks, we often use the term "in good flesh" to indicate a healthful condition of body and mind; as a term to describe the more abundant life, and the word is sometimes employed in that sense in Scripture. The "holy flesh" in Jer. 11:15 is a case in point.

The Hebrew word *basar*, here translated "holy flesh," has for its definitions: "To be joyful, cheerful, especially in receiving glad tidings . . . to gladden with glad tidings . . . to bear glad tidings, to announce glad tidings to anyone. . . . announcing victory to a great host . . . a messenger

of good news, especially of peace." As an example of its use in this figurative sense, the lexicon gives Isa. 40:9 and 52:7. These texts read as follows: "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! . . . How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"

The term "holy flesh," as used in Jeremiah 11, not only implies that we must eat every Word of God, that we must obey the command to put all evil away, but it also includes the glad tidings of the coming Kingdom. In reality, the "holy flesh" which we must eat to live in the world to come is the gospel, both doctrinal and practical, and more: it is a messenger of good news, a bearer of glad tidings, an announcer of coming victory. And it provides the hope of obtaining the glorious reward to be given at the second coming of Christ. He will come, and by conquering the forces of evil He will establish peace in all the earth.

What a lovely definition of "holy flesh"—"announcing victory to a great host"! And what a day of victory that will be when every knee shall bend to our coming King and every tongue sing His praise, and every faithful contender for the goal of eternal life shall be rewarded with the full salvation, "exceeding, abundantly above all" that we can now think of, or ask for!

Let us freely eat of this holy flesh, that which will give us immortality, a life and a glory that will never, no never, pass away.

THUS SPEAKETH CHRIST OUR LORD

(Engraved on an old slab in the Cathedral of Lubeck, Germany).

Thus speaketh Christ our Lord to us:

Ye call me MASTER, and obey me not,
Ye call me LIGHT, and seek me not,
Ye call me the WAY, and walk me not,
Ye call me LIFE, and desire me not,
Ye call me WISE, and follow me not,
Ye call me FAIR, and love me not,
Ye call me RICH, and ask me not,
Ye call me ETERNAL, and treasure me not,
Ye call me GRACIOUS, and trust me not,
Ye call me NOBLE, and serve me not,
Ye call me MIGHTY, and honor me not,
Ye call me JUST, and fear me not;
If I condemn ye, blame me not.

Time whose tooth gnaws away everything else, is powerless against Truth.

Meditations

On the Word

"For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not"
(II Corinthians 8:12).

It is very often the case that the greatest idealists are also the most practical men and women. In fact, it may be said that the ability to combine these two extremes in one personality is one of the marks of true greatness.

Such a man was St. Paul, who, in addition to being the world's greatest missionary preacher, was also one of its foremost takers of collections. These were never for his own benefit, for he preached without charge and supported himself (I Cor. 9:18; Acts 20:34), but for the relief of needy churches and the furtherance of the gospel. Experience had taught him that, while the Almighty does not Himself need our offerings, in an unsympathetic world it takes money to "makes the wheels go 'round."

In the matter of temporal giving, the principle is clear: a man can give only according to his ability. What he does not have he cannot give, and the smallest gifts may represent the greatest sacrifice and the most praiseworthy motive. The well-known incident of the poor widow and her offering of two mites makes it clear that it is the spirit of willingness, and not the amount given, that counts.

Far from being confined to the Sunday offering or the yearly tithe, the spirit of our text should be carried over into every avenue and activity of life. Money is only one thing—it is a "defense," the Wise Man says, but only as a symbol of goods or services. Apart from that, it is worthless, as many a bankrupt nation has learned to its sorrow. But the goods and services have intrinsic value and may be given freely, even if no money is involved. "Silver and gold have I none," said Peter to the lame man, "but such as I have give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

To the worker for God, who would really "get started and go somewhere," the first step is self-examination and self-acceptance, to find out what is in us and realistically set to work to see what can be done with it. It is necessary to aspire to the heights, but an apple tree would gain little by aspiring to be an orange tree. What can be done, however, is to make it a better apple tree. We are what we are, with all our limitations and possibilities. The goal is set before us, and it is within our limits. This we know by divine revelation, even though we may at times feel inadequate.

It is natural to vision greener pastures beyond the next fence, to wish for the other fellow's ability, or his disposition, or his job, but such wishing will get us nowhere, except as we imitate his desirable qualities. What we do must be done with our own equipment, under our own power. In First Corinthians 12 the same Apostle illustrates the Church, the mystical body of Christ, by the exquisite harmony in the members of the human body. The ear cannot be the eye, nor the foot the head, yet

every member has its place, its function, which it is expected to perform in unity and rhythm with all the rest.

Thus it is that when one member suffers, all suffer with it; when one rejoices, all rejoice with it; when one lags, it is distress to all. We are important. And it is very important to us that we do our part, for the body can get along without us; our share will be done by someone, if not by us. Dead branches are pruned from trees and vines, and the body of Christ is peculiar in that it possesses the power of regeneration, enabling it to replace members which become dead and unprofitable. The body will be presented perfect and complete in the great Day of Judgment, and if we are not a part of it, we only shall be the losers.

Regardless of our natural endowments, which are admittedly unequal, the Eternal has just one requirement—our best. Because we feel that our best is not very good, because we feel our inferiority, that does not excuse us from trying. A debtor who makes no attempt to pay simply because he lacks the full amount at once would hardly be called honest.

Anyway, what is our best? Who is to be judge? Fortunately there is a standard. We shall not be able to plead that we did our best and it was not good enough. The minimum standard is perfection, the keeping of every commandment of God. Realizing our best, using all that is in us and succeeding, is less a matter of natural endowments than of mental attitude, just as a stout heart always means more than a strong arm. We all remember the schoolbook story of the coward who, afraid to fight with his inferior sword, broke it and crept away; while the prince, wounded and disarmed, caught up the broken weapon and hewed his way to victory. Our "best" calls for the employment of our hidden resources, those reserves of strength and courage now lying unused, perhaps unknown.

The thing that brings out our best, that shows us what we can really do, is the thing recommended in our text—a willing mind—a willingness expanded to the point of eagerness. Such a willingness does so many things. It releases dormant energies; it makes unpleasant duties part of joyful service; it is the anesthetic that lessens the pain of self-crucifixion. Through the mercy and justice of God, it even supplies for the abilities we lack. The Prophet of old put his finger squarely on the two things needful when he wrote, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land." More than this no man can do. A reluctant or grudging service is no service at all.

Our first thought in connection with our text is the one first mentioned—that of the "have-not," the man or woman who is willing but lacks the "wherewith." But it also operates in reverse. It applies equally to the "have," the person of more than average endowments. To be acceptable, his offering, whether of goods or service, must be accompanied by the same willingness we command in the less fortunate—the willingness to give all, and wish we could do more.

The Eternal could find millions upon millions of part-time, less-than-best servants, but the standard is higher than that. Eternal life in glory is the thing at stake, and if such a prize is not worth entire consecration, it is worth nothing. That is what Jesus had in mind when He said to the rich young man, "Sell that thou hast, and give

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Questions and Answers



"I am happy to have your book, 'The Coming of Jesus and Elijah, and the Great Battle of Armageddon.' I am not criticizing but I would like to be enlightened on the following subjects.

Should Christ's second advent be on the very beginning of the Millennial reign, the seventh day which is the Sabbath that must be kept holy (the seventh thousand-year period) wouldn't the Battle of Armageddon have to be previous to Christ's second advent and the Millennium, or after the thousand-year period during which Satan is loosed out of his prison for a little season? Or I am wondering if Christ and Armageddon may come shortly before the beginning of the seventh thousand-year period?

If we have time recorded right from the beginning of time, and this being July 1961, time is nearing the end of the six-thousand-year period which leaves approximately 39 years, 5 months to go. Should Elijah come forty years prior to the beginning of the seventh thousand-year period, (the thousand-year reign of Christ) He would have had to come at the beginning of 1961, and would be here now."

There is no Scriptural proof that Christ's second coming would coincide with the beginning of the thousand-year dispensation. As stated in the booklet *The Coming of Jesus and Elijah*. . . Christ's coming must precede the beginning of the Millennium by forty years. From Rev. 5:5 and 6:2 we learn that Christ as the "Lion of the tribe of Juda" will ride forth "conquering and to conquer." That is to be the first step in the work He is destined to perform.

Psalm 2 reveals that when God begins His work upon earth which is to terminate with Christ His Son being set upon the throne on His holy hill of Zion; "The kings of the earth shall set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." They will resist Christ. Psalm 149 pictures the first steps to be taken in bringing the world into subjection and preparing its inhabitants for the Millennial reign: "Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud. . . Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgments written: this honor have all his saints" (vs. 5-9).

Isaiah 63:1-4 pictures Him that is "glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength," as wearing "dyed garments from Bozrah." "Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat. . . For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come." Christ's first work is judicial. Armageddon must precede the Millennium.

The word Millennium signifies the thousand years of Christ's peaceful reign upon earth. Such an era could not begin with the earth in a shambles as the result of a world-wide destruction. The forty years will be needed to conquer the nations, and rehabilitate the earth thus making it suitable for the vast program of establishing peace on earth good will to men.

The revealed plan would not allow the concept of Armageddon being at the close of the Millennium. Revelation 20 is definite: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, . . And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled:"—this forecast pictures Armageddon—"after that he must be loosed a little season. . . And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison" (vs. 1-3, 7).

The best authorities agree that we have no accurate count of time from the beginning of the six thousand years until the present. And Jesus likewise foretold the same truth: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man" (Mark 13:32). However, Paul informs us in I Thess. 5:1, that we will know the "times" and "seasons" perfectly. Hence we are confident that the coming of Elijah, Jesus, and the instigation of Armageddon, is imminent.

"Matthew 24 says when the Lord comes it will be as it was in the days of Noah (very wicked) and there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. How can this be if Elias has already appeared and restored all things as it was in the beginning?"

Jesus said, "Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things." But He did not add "as it was in the beginning." Elijah will restore the power of the Holy Spirit, so miracles again will be performed on earth. He will restore the sleeping dead so they can meet Christ in the air at His return to earth (I Thess. 4:17). He will restore all things "by bringing in a great moral reformation." The restoration of the earth to Eden beauty (according to the theological concept) will not be effected until the forty-year-cleaning-up-period has been accomplished.

Elijah's message will awaken only a few. It will take the outpouring of God's judgments to induce the Gentiles to "come from the ends of the earth, and . . . say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit" (Jer. 16:19).

MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD, conc. Continued from page 10

to the poor, and follow me." This command is to all. When we have complied with it, our lives and our possessions are still in our hands, but on a different basis. We are stewards, not owners. The young man, we read, "went away sorrowful"; it was too stern a proposition. He would have given part, but not all. He would gladly have given what he had not, but what he had he was unwilling to part with, even to gain eternal life.

It is, then, all or nothing. The price is high, but the rewards are higher. "Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?" (I Chron. 29:5).

Time is so fleeting, if we do not remember God in our youth, age may find us incapable of thinking about Him.

Occupy Till I Come

A sacred trust my Lord to me has given:
The pounds are His; to use them is my task.
Whether 'neath skies all bright or tempest-riven
His service leads, it is not mine to ask;
He tells me not how long the time shall be
Till He shall deem it best to call me home:
I only hear Him saying unto me,
"Occupy thou until I come."

He does not say that I may choose my toil
And only do the things that please me best;
Nor does He tell me when I've served a while
That I may lay His armor by and rest;
But He does ask for calm endurance to the end,
Alike through joy or pain, through light or gloom,
And promises to be my Guide, and Friend;
So I must occupy until He come.

How dare I, then unwrap the precious pounds
In folds of uselessness, and lay aside!
On every side rich fields of toil abound
Where they may be increased and glorified.
I may not understand why He to me
But perchance one talent gave, while to some
He gives the five or ten; yet faithfully
Must I still occupy until He come.

Why should it matter whether one or ten,
Since all are His, and but a trust retained
To use for Him until He comes again
To see how much my toil for Him has gained?
But it does matter whether I, at last,
Among the faithless meet a bitter doom,
Or hear Him say to me, "Well done! Thou hast
Been faithful unto Me until I come!"



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